

**AN ACT
OF PRAYER**



THE IONA BOOKS



T. F. Torrance.

A*

THE IONA BOOKS

Iona's lonely isle,
Where Scotland's kings are laid.

James Grahame.

Unto this place, albeit so small and poor, great homage shall yet be paid, not only by the kings and people of the Scots, but by the rulers of barbarous and distant nations with their people also. In great veneration too shall it be held by the holy men of other Churches.

St Columba.

This, dear children, is my last advice to you—that you preserve with each other sincere charity and peace.

St Columba.

In this little island a lamp was lit whose flame lighted pagan Europe. . . . Here Learning and Faith had their tranquil home. . . . And here Hope waits.

To tell the story of Iona is to go back to God, and to end in God.

Fiona Macleod.

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AN ACT OF PRAYER
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IT is in the belief that the new spirit of mutual love which has arisen in our midst must be associated with a new spirit of desire towards God, and that a common Act of approach may emphasise and aid our fellowship in Him as well as our mutual fellowship, that this little leaflet is, in all humility, offered to such as may find it of service.

Obviously there is nothing here but mere suggestion; we shall, each for him or herself, enlarge it from personal and relative knowledge and experience.

The intercessory pages are in the form of a double cycle, and may be used either for morning and evening, or for alternate weeks.

A. H. S.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

OUR Scottish Nation has in the Providence of God been fashioned through a long and arduous discipline for service in the Divine Kingdom. To unsympathetic eyes the deep divisions and strenuous contendings which have marked its history since the Reformation have had little reason or meaning behind them. Deeper knowledge and sympathy will rather trace in them the working out of certain great principles by a people which, whatever its faults, has always cared supremely about religion, and has been prepared to back its convictions by heavy sacrifices.

But it has become clearer of later years that the work which God now has for our country to do is too great to be successfully achieved by a divided Church. Hence the last fifty years have been years of consolidation; and it cannot be supposed that that process has reached its term. There remains much to be done which passes the present wisdom of the wisest leadership. This is frankly conceded by our ecclesiastical and political leaders.

But there is the more need that all who believe in God and who love the Mother Land should unite in prayer for the coming of the world-wide Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. In former days we made Solemn League and Covenant with God. Is there not again a call for such a great-hearted approach of our whole people to the Living God in prayer, intercession, and dedication? We must conceive of

the Kingdom in forms different from those which possessed the minds of our fathers. The Providence and Spirit of the Living God have led us into a wider and humaner world. But the soul and substance are the same.

This Act of Prayer has been drawn up and is now published with a view to suggest such a common approach to God. It is of necessity simple and tentative, but it is hoped that even in its present form, and with its interleaving for more personal additions, it may serve a purpose; that it may unite in common desire and prayer many who have desired some such guide, and also many who have been and still are separated by barriers of usage and of historic tradition. True union must begin in common worship.

And indeed, if prayer be what our Lord said of it, and what, following Him, the Church believed it to be in the days

“when there was mid-sea, and the mighty things,”

then a revival of the spirit of prayer is absolutely vital.

That there are signs all around us of an awakening to this truth is one of the most hopeful symptoms of our time. New attention is given to the devotional part of the Services of the Church. All who know the remarkable religious movement amongst students know the simple faith in the power of prayer which has throughout been its safeguard

and its inspiration. The same note characterized the World Missionary Conference. Already there are in different parts of Scotland groups of men and women, like the old Praying Societies which did so much for our land in the eighteenth century.

This Liturgy has been prepared in the belief that while many pray to better purpose without guidance there are also many who find suggestion, especially for intercession, invaluable. It is unnecessary, in the case of such, to defend a fixed method of prayer. Our Lord Himself must often have used the Liturgy of the Synagogue, and has given us the simplest and greatest form of all. Our Scottish Reformers believed in and themselves prepared forms of worship. Spiritual reason and experience teach us that while the vital necessity of free prayer must be maintained, we must recognize the immeasurable value of definite, ordered, persistent, common prayer and intercession.

Many of us give singularly little thought to this subject and are sadly deficient therefore, in the method of our prayers. They are not great, as befits the God whom we approach, or the Kingdom which we seek, or the Humanity for which Christ died. They never will be sufficient for these things. But we may make them less unworthy, and should welcome any aid. The range of interest and nobility of expression of this "Act" are such that it cannot be used without broadening the spiritual vision and purifying the spiritual imagination and leading to-

wards the recovery of that long-lost Faith of which Christ said

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

Moreover, they who use its guide to intercession ought, must needs, feel the strength that comes from being in communion alike with those who throughout Scotland are praying along with them, and with those for whom they pray. Was it not of this growth of the spirit of Love that our Lord was thinking when He said,

“If two of you shall agree as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in Heaven.”

Finally, such common increase in Faith and in Love should lead surely to the growth of that spirit of Hope, of confident expectation of good, which is the third great condition of prevailing prayer.

“Believe that ye have received it, and ye shall have it.”

Every prayer answered is a new proof of God's power, love, and liberty to help His children. May these prayers be so used that it shall be easier for our nation, and for the world to believe in the living God, and so to bring in His Kingdom with power.

D. S. CAIRNS.

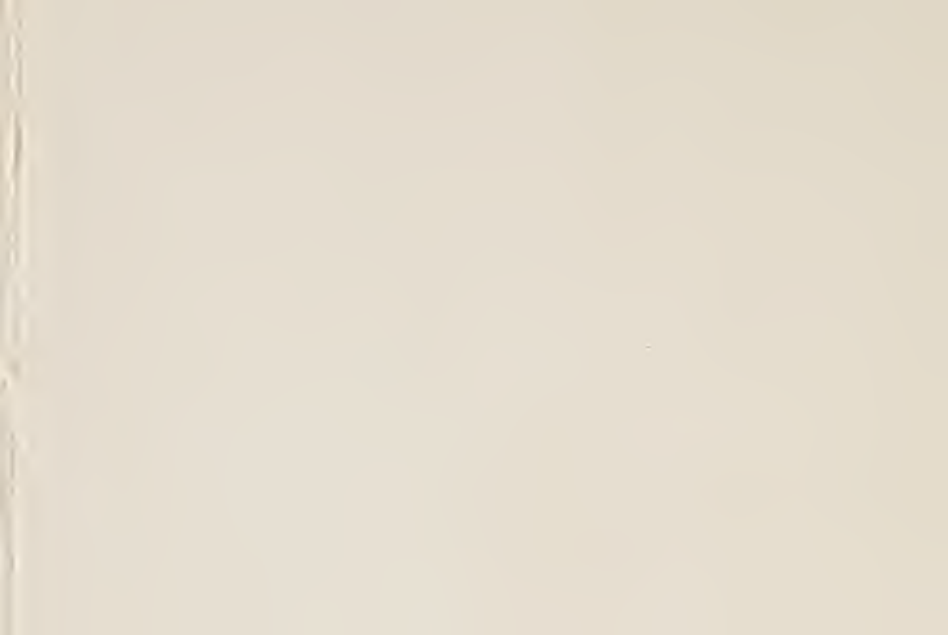
THANKSGIVING

PENITENCE

WORSHIP

CONSECRATION

THANKSGIVING



WE give Thee Thanks for Thy great Goodness to us, O God.

For Thy Gifts common to all Thy Children:

For Thy Fatherly love, Almighty to win us—

For the Life, Cross, Passion, and Glory of
Thy Son our Lord, Strong to save us—

For Thy Holy Spirit, Thy immanent Love,
around and within us—

For the Church Universal, and for our Union
in Her—

For the Forgiveness of sin, and for the promise of Holiness—

For the Hope of everlasting Life—

for Freedom, their Simplicity and Austerity of Life—

For our Mothers, the Women of Scotland: silent, tender, strong, who made the Men—

For the Church of our Fathers, and for her Contribution to the Church Catholic and Universal—

For the Watchword of our Fathers; “FOR CHRIST’S CROWN AND THE COVENANT—”

*“We have heard with our ears, O Lord,
Our Fathers have told us,*

*What work Thou didst in their days, in the times
of old."*

AND we give Thee Thanks for Thy Good-
ness to us of this later Day:
For an awakening Social Conscience—
For new Visions of Thy Purpose—
For new Hopes of the Coming of Thy King-
dom—
For the new Sense of the Diversity of Calling
and of Gift, within the Unity of Truth—
For the new Desire that as a United Church in

Scotland we may the better glorify Thee
in our own Land and in the World.

“O Come, let us sing unto the Lord:

*Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salva-
tion.*

*Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving,
And make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms.*

O Come, let us worship and fall down:

Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For He is our God:

*And we are the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.”*

PENITENCE AND CONFESSION

WE confess with Sorrow that we do not live
according to our Heritage.

We remember our sin:

Personal individual Sin—

The Sin of the Family life, the Weakening
of the Bonds of Home—

*“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy Lov-
ing-kindness:*

*According to the Multitude of Thy Tender Mer-
cies blot out my transgressions.*

*Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.*

*For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.”*

WE remember the Sin of our People:
Selfishness, Luxury, Pride, lack of Simplicity of Life—
Drunkenness, Impurity, Gambling—
Failure to deal effectively with the terrible conditions under which so large a proportion of our Brethren live—
That which we reveal to the Stranger within our Gates, dishonouring to our Land and to our God—
That which we carry to other Lands of lowered Character and Aims—

*“If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who should stand?
But there is forgiveness with Thee,
That Thou mayest be feared.”*

WE remember the Sin of our Church:
All mere Conventionality, all Carelessness
or Irreverence in Worship—
All Contradiction between Profession and Prac-
tice—
All Secularising of Things sacred—
All Divisions recognised to be Sin yet not end-
ed—

All Prejudice, Misunderstanding, Misconstruc-
tion of Motive—

All Failure to draw in in Love the Poor, the
Maimed, the Halt, the Blind—

All Failure to recognise the Call of every Mem-
ber to strive with Heart and Will to bring
in the Reign of Love—

All Lack of absolute unswerving Allegiance to
her Lord—

All Lack of absolute mutual Loyalty and Love—
And much other Sin—

*“Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniqui-
ty, and passeth by the transgression of the rem-
nants of His Heritage?”*

He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy.

He will again have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

*"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.*

*Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord reckoneth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile."*

"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and my iniquity have I not hid:

*I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;
And Thou forgavest the guilt of my sin."*

WORSHIP

WE worship Thee:

In Thy glorious Universe, in our own
glorious World—

In the World of human Life, human Love, hu-
man Gifts, human Character, human Ex-
perience—

In Thy Self-revelations, Thy Righteousness,
Faithfulness, Holiness, Thy Graciousness
and Love, Thy Fatherhood.

“Thy way, O God, is in holiness.”

*“As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks,
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God.*

*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God,
When shall I come and appear before God?"*

*"O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee:
My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee,
In a dry and weary land, where no water is.
So have I looked for Thee in the sanctuary,
To behold Thy power and Thy glory.
For thy loving-kindness is better than life;
My lips shall praise Thee."*

WE worship Thee:

In Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord—

In His loving Approaches to us—

In His giving of Himself to the uttermost—

In His gracious Revelings to us of Thy Father-
ly Pity and Grace, Thy Fatherly Purpose
to bring us Home to Thyself—

In His most glorious Cross and Passion, through
which we may know the very Heart of
Godhead—

In His Victory, in His Glory, in His Humanity
with Thee—

*“Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors :
And the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory ?
The Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory.”*

WE worship Thee:
In Thy Church throughout the world—
In the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood
of Christ—
In the Holy Spirit, present with and in the inner
Circle of the Saints—

In every holy Impulse, in every holy Life—
In every Conquest over Evil within or without—
In every outgoing of Love, Service, Devotion—
In every Glimpse vouchsafed to us of Thy work-
ing among the Children of Men—

*“ Oh, how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast
laid up for them that fear Thee;
Which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in
Thee before the sons of men.*

Thou hidest them in the secret of Thy Presence. . . .

*“ Give unto the Lord, O ye sons of God,
Give unto the Lord glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name;
Worship the Lord in hallowed array.”*

CONSECRATION

*Thy vows are upon me, O Lord :
I will render thank-offerings unto Thee.*

WE bring to Thee, as is most due:
Our Lives in every Relation,
In Work and in Recreation—
In Joy and in Sorrow—
In Home and in Public—
In the so-called Secular, and in the so-called
Sacred—
In an unified Life—

WE bring to Thee, as is most due :
Our Lives as Brethren, and as Thy Child-
ren—

In Forbearance and in Forgiveness—

In the Bearing of one another's Burdens—

In absolute mutual Loyalty—

In the Unity of the Spirit—

In a Love which shall be, near as may be, as our
Lord and Master loved us—

WE bring to Thee, as is most due:
Our Lives as Members of Thy Church—
In Worship, Trust, and Love—
In Hope and Assurance of Acceptance—
In a personal and united Front against the Forces
of Evil—
In a readiness to bear the Cross—
In a readiness to give up at all Times the Less for
the Greater—
In a solemn Devotion, and an abounding Joy in
Christ our Lord.

*I will go into Thy House with Burnt Offerings:
I will pay Thee my vows,
Which my lips have uttered,
And my mouth hath spoken."*

**A DAILY CYCLE OF INTER-
SESSION ARRANGED FOR
TWO WEEKS**

FIRST WEEK

SUNDAY

PERSONAL Interests and Needs—Family—
Friends—

The Worship and Ministry of the Church—

Our own Church, Minister, Congregation—Our
Activities—

Lonely country Churches—Great City Churches—

Missionary Work among the little Ones, the
Lapsing, the Careless, the Poor, the Aged,
the Invalid—

All seeking Souls—

*“Except the Lord build the House,
They labour in vain that build it:
Except the Lord keep the City,
The watchman watcheth but in vain.”*

*“Lord, I have loved the Habitation of Thy House,
And the Place where Thy Glory dwelleth.”*

*“Wait silently, my soul, upon God,
From Him cometh my Salvation.”*

MONDAY

OUR NATION:

THE larger Commonwealth—
His Majesty the King and the Royal House—
The Government, Lords, and Commons—
Rulers—Magistrates—Servants of the State—
Leaders of Opinion—the Press—Education—
Commerce—
Classes—
Institutions—
Our Colonies and Dependencies—
National Character: Peace, Righteousness,

Self-control—a due Regard for the Rights
and Interests of other Nations—

*“Sure y His Salvation is nigh them that fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our Land.”*

*“The Lord will give that which is good;
And our Land shall yield her increase.
Righteousness shall go before Him:
And Peace in the way of His steps.”*

TUESDAY

THE NATIONS, CHRISTIAN:

THE Advance of Peace Methods between Nations bearing Christ's Name—

The Sense of Responsibility towards the awakening Nations of the East and South—

Loyalty to the King of Kings, and a constant Remembrance of the Kingdom which is to come.

*“All Nations whom Thou hast made shall come and
worship before Thee, O Lord;*

And shall glorify Thy Name:

For Thou art great and doest wondrous things;

Thou art God alone.”

WEDNESDAY

THE CHURCH:

ALL her Ministers and her Workers—
The Church living and serving—
The Problem of the Lapsed and of the Lapsing—
The Problem of Re-statements—
The Problem of Dis-union—
All her Branches—
All her Members—
The Tempted, Perplexed, Discouraged—
The Weary and Heavy-laden—
The Glad and Satisfied—

*“There is a River, the Streams whereof make glad
the City of God,
The Holy Place of the tabernacles of the Most
High.*

*God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved:
God shall help her at the dawn of the morning.”¹*

¹ R.V., Margin.

THURSDAY

THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

MISSIONARY Societies—

Modern Movements; The Continuation
Committee of the World Missionary Con-
ference in all its Outgoings—

The Student Movement in all its Branches—

Young People's Movements—

The Laymen's Missionary Movement.

The Awakening of the Church to the World
Crisis, and the urgent Call to meet it—

The Coming, through all Movement, Religious
and other, of the Kingdom of Christ—

*“He shall have Dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth.”*

FRIDAY

THE HOME:

THE Sanctity of Marriage—
The Sanctity of the Home—
The Home Training of the Children—
The various Relationships of modern Life.

*“ Let not them that wait upon Thee, O Lord God of
Hosts, be ashamed through me,
Let not those that seek Thee be confounded through
me.”*

SATURDAY

DAY of Remembrance:
Penitence—
Praise.

*“Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty:
Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too wonderful for me.
Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul;
Like a weaned child with his mother.
My soul is with me like a weaned child.”*

SECOND WEEK

SUNDAY

PERSONAL Interests and Needs—Family—
Friends—

The Worship and Ministry of the Church—

All Work undertaken during the Day—

The Young Sister Churches in Missionary Lands
—their Ministers, their peculiar Needs—
their young People, and little Children—

“Wilt Thou not revive us again:

That Thy people may rejoice in Thee?

Show us Thy loving-kindness, O Lord,

And grant us Thy salvation.

I will hear what God the Lord will speak:

*For He will speak Peace unto His people, and to
His Saints,
To them who turn their hearts unto Him.”¹*

*“How lovely are Thy dwelling-places, O Lord of
Hosts,
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts
of the Lord,
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”*

¹ R. V., Margin.

MONDAY

OUR SCOTTISH NATION:

THE needs peculiar to our own Land—
Our Cities and Villages—
Our Highlands and Islands—
Our Social Problems—Our Industrial Prob-
lems—Our Education—
Our Sons and Daughters who are emigrating;
That we may as a People, recover a Sense of Vo-
cation within our Land, in the larger Com-
monwealth, in the World—

*“Let Thy Work appear unto Thy Servants,
And Thy glory unto their children.*”

*And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us:
And prosper Thou the work of our hands:
Yea, prosper Thou our handiwork.*

TUESDAY

THE NATIONS, NON-CHRISTIAN :

THE Far East: China—Japan—the young
Nations arising out of the old—
India and Ceylon—National and other Move-
ments—
The Lands of Islam—
Africa—Egypt—
South America—
The far northern Lands—
The Islands of the Southern Seas
Racial Problems—

Problems of Re-awakening and of Revolution—
Problems of the Meeting of East and West.

*“ Be still and know that I am God,
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”*

*“ All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn
unto the Lord :
All the kindreds of the nations shall worship be-
fore Him.
For the kingdom is the Lord's :
He is the Governor among the Nations.”*

WEDNESDAY

THE CHURCH :

NEW Thirst for God—

New Trust and Devotion to her Lord—

New Desire to fulfil the Law of Love—

Wise Leadership—

Universal Sense of Responsibility and of Privilege
in Service—

Mutual Encouragement in Service—

Mutual Loyalty in the great Things—

A right use of Sacramental Grace.

*“ One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I
seek after; ”*

*That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the
days of my life;
To behold the beauty of the Lord,
And to consider His Temple."*

THURSDAY

THE KINGDOM OF GOD :

MISSIONARY Lands and Missions—
Missionary Methods, Evangelistic, Edu-
cational, Social, Medical, Industrial—
All Missionaries, Men and Women—Home and
Foreign—
Young Churches in their Strength, and their
Weakness—
Catechumens and Enquirers—
Local Problems—

*“ Sing unto the Lord, bless His Name :
Show forth His salvation from day to day.*

*Declare His glory among the Nations,
His wonders among all People."*

*"O Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
Fear before Him all the Earth.*

*Say among the Nations that the Lord reigneth:
The World is stablished that it cannot be moved:
He shall judge the peoples with equity."*

FRIDAY

PROBLEMS OF THE RELATION OF MAN AND WOMAN:

PROBLEMS Political, Social, Industrial—
Problems arising out of the new Consciousness of Women—

Problems arising out of the Loosening of the Bonds of the Home—

A right Judgment in all Things—

A strong Sense of the true Unity of the Problem—

A constant Reference to Christ, the Master Teacher, the Reconciler of all Conflict, in Whom there is neither Male nor Female, because He is the one Representative of Humanity.

*Unto Thee do I lift up mine Eyes,
O Thou that dwellest in the Heavens.
Behold, as the eyes of servants unto the hand of their
master,
As the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress:
So our eyes look unto the Lord our God,
Until He have mercy upon us.
Have mercy upon us, O Lord,
Have mercy upon us.”*

SATURDAY

DAY of Remembrance :
Penitence—
Praise—

*“I will sing of mercy and of judgment:
Unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing praises.
I will give heed unto the perfect way:
Oh, when wilt Thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”*

THE COMMANDMENTS

MASTER, *which is the great Commandment in the Law?*

THOU shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.

This is the first and great Commandment.

And a Second like unto it is this:

THOU shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.

On these two Commandments hangeth the whole Law, and the Prophets.

ST MATT. xxii. 35-40 (R.V.).

THE REFORMATION CONFESSION

HEAVENLY Father, merciful and everlasting God, we acknowledge and confess before Thy Divine Majesty that we are poor miserable Sinners, conceived and brought forth in Sin and Corruption. We are prone to all evil. We cannot, without Thee, do anything that is good. And we daily, and in many ways, transgress Thy holy Commandments. Thereby we provoke Thine Anger, against us, and draw down upon ourselves, by Thy just Judgment, Death and Destruction.

BUT, O Lord, we repent and are sorry from our Hearts that we have so displeased Thee. We condemn ourselves and our Misdoings, and

pray that Thy Grace may bring help to our Distress and Misery.

BE pleased, therefore, to have Mercy upon us, O most gracious God and Father. Forgive us all our Sins, through the holy Sufferings of Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive us our Sins; and grant us now the Gifts of Thy Holy Spirit. Increase these in us from Day to Day; so that we, acknowledging with our whole Hearts our own Unrighteousness, may truly repent us of the same; that Sin may be destroyed in us; and that we may bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness and a pure Life which are well pleasing unto Thee; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

(From the Larger Catechism)

MAY one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due Preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?

One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due Preparation to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true Interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; And in God's Account hath it, if he be duly affected with the Apprehension of the Want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from Iniquity: In which Case (because Promises

are made, and this Sacrament is appointed, for the Relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his Unbelief, and Labour to have his Doubts resolved; And, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.

HOW are they that receive the Sacrament to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

They that receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their Sins and Wants; Of the Truth and Measure of their Knowledge, Faith, Repentance; Love to God and the Brethren, Charity to all Men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; Of their desires after Christ, and of their new Obedience; And by renewing the Exercise of these Graces, by serious Meditation, and fervent prayer.

O LOVING Father, Who by thine Oath hast promised unto us a Saviour, Jesus Christ Thy Son: Thou hast not deceived us, but hast indeed given Him unto us as Thy Word hath declared; and by Thy Sacraments Thou hast confirmed it unto us this day; yea, He hath further promised that He will abide with us unto the end of the World. Therefore, dear Father, we beseech Thee, that Thou wilt bless us in all our Ways, govern

us, and replenish us with Joy. Let Thy Crown
and Kingdom abide above us; and preserve us in
Peace through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

OUR Father, which art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily Bread.
And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them
that trespass against us.
And lead us not into Temptation;
But deliver us from Evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom,
The Power,
And the Glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.

THE IONA BOOKS

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Others on Iona, St Columba, and St Bride to follow

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